Payroll jobs rise after seasonal fall

Media Release

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Source: Weekly Payroll Jobs and Wages in Australia, Week ending 24 April 2021

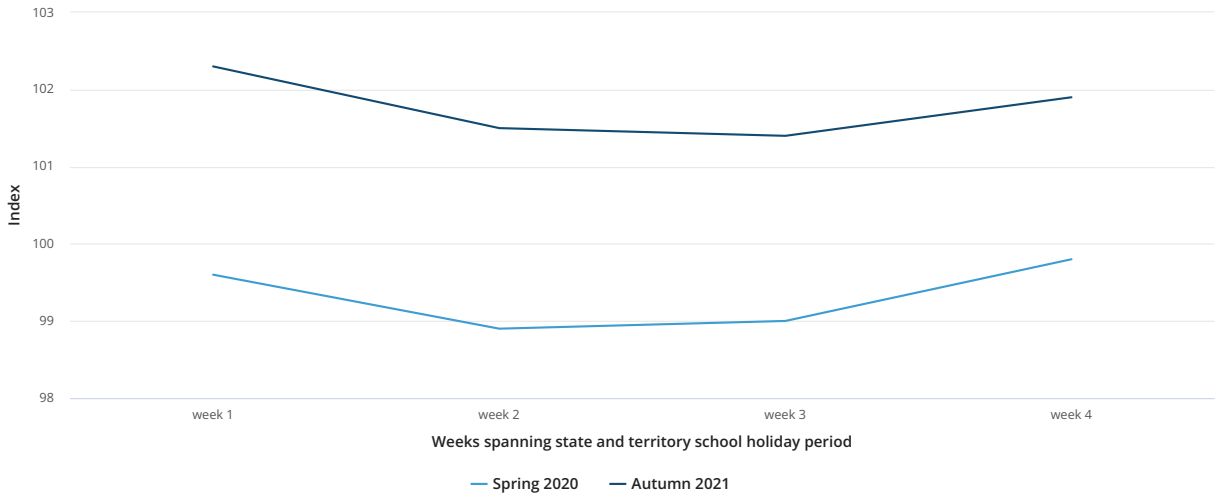
Payroll jobs rose by 0.4 per cent in the fortnight to 24 April 2021, following a 1.6 per cent fall in the previous fortnight, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) today.

Bjorn Jarvis, head of Labour Statistics at the ABS, said: “Seasonality around Easter in the previous fortnight makes it difficult to gauge any effect of the end of the JobKeeper wage subsidy on 28 March. The latest fortnight of payroll jobs data continues to show some of the seasonality around school holidays.

“Nationwide pandemic restrictions were in place over the same period a year ago, which makes it difficult to determine what are usual changes in payroll jobs during April. However, the seasonal pattern seen in the latest month of payroll jobs data is similar to what we saw during the Spring 2020 school holiday period.”

While school holidays commence at different times around the country, all states and territories had one week of holidays in common in the last month, which was also the case in the Spring 2020 school holiday period. At that time, payroll jobs fell by almost 1 per cent in the common week of school holidays, remained relatively flat in week three, then rose to near pre-holiday levels in week four.

Comparison of payroll jobs across school holiday periods



Week 1 in Spring 2020 is the week ending 26 September and in Autumn 2021 is the week ending 3 April.

Mr Jarvis said, “In the latest fortnight of data, payroll jobs were above pre-pandemic levels in every state and territory. The largest increases in payroll jobs from pre-pandemic levels were seen in the Northern Territory, Western Australia and South Australia (up 5.4 per cent, 4.5 per cent and 3.6 per cent).

At 24 April 2021, payroll jobs worked by women were 1.4 per cent above pre-pandemic levels, compared with 0.1 percent below for men.

Over half (53 per cent) of payroll jobs held by women are in four industries (Health care and social assistance, Education and training, Retail trade, and Accommodation and food services). Amongst these large employing industries, only payroll jobs held by women in Health care and social assistance were above pre-pandemic levels (up 4.4 per cent) at 24 April 2021. Payroll jobs held by women in the other three industries were below pre-pandemic levels: Education and training (down 2.1 per cent); Retail trade (down 4.4 per cent); and Accommodation and food services (down 15.4 per cent).

The ABS acknowledges the continued support from the Australian Taxation Office in enabling the ABS to produce the statistics providing weekly insights into the Australian labour market.

Media notes

- Payroll jobs are not seasonally adjusted, which generally require at least three years of data. The seasonal changes accounted for in the longstanding Labour Force statistics series should be considered when interpreting recovery in employment statistics through the COVID period.
- Labour Force data for April shows a large fall in hours worked whenever Easter falls similarly early in the month, as in 2015 when hours worked fell by 17 per cent between March and April. The next release of Labour Force (Thursday 20 May) will include seasonally adjusted data for April 2021.
- In each release, as more complete data are received, payroll jobs and wages estimates are revised.
- While the ABS accounts for employees being paid with different frequencies, there are points in the year when additional reporting activity is more likely to occur, which may flow through to published estimates.
- Estimates of payroll jobs by sub-state regions through to the week ending 24 April 2021, will be added to this release on Wednesday 12 May 2021.
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